4. General grant-in-aid Programme for Assistance in the field of Social Defence
5. Integrated Programme for Street Children
6. Integrated Programme for Older Persons
7. Grant-in-aid to voluntary Organization for the Welfare of Scheduled Castes (SCs)
8. Coaching and Allied Assistance for Weaker Sections including Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes and Minorities
9. Assistance to Voluntary Organisations working for the Welfare of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)

Non-Plan

10. Assistance to Panchayati Raj Institutes/Voluntary Organizations/ Self Help Groups for Construction of Old Age Homes/Multi Service Centres for Older Persons

Status of dalit Christians and dalit Muslims

117. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMAD KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the dalit Sikhs and dalit Buddhists enjoy the right and privileges of the Scheduled Castes;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the reasons for not including the dalit Christians and dalit Muslims in the list of Scheduled Castes;

(d) whether, while passing the legislation for giving Scheduled Caste status to neo-Buddhists in May 1990, an assurance was given that Government would sympathetically consider to give same status to dalit Christians and dalit Muslims;

(e) if so, the reasons for not-implementing the assurances; and

(f) what action Government contemplate in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DR. SATYA NARAYAN JATIYA): (a) and (b) In view of the provisions of Para 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, persons of

enumerated communities included in the Schedules to the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 and professing the Hindu, the Sikh and the Buddhist religion are eligible to draw benefits of Scheduled Castes.

(c) to (f) The issue of inclusion of Scheduled Castes persons converted to Christianity, in the list of Scheduled Castes has been considered by the Government in consultation with the Registrar General of India and the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and it has been decided not to accede to the proposal. The proposal for inclusion of Scheduled Castes converts to the Muslim religion in the list of Scheduled Castes, has been referred to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Demands of disability sector

118. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to stater

(a) whether Government agree that there is a need to look into the demands of the disability sector;

(b) if so, whether any steps have been taken in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI NAGMANI): (a) to (c) the Ministry of Social Justice and empowerment has occasionally received representations from disabled persons and organizations representing them. The demands cover a wide range of issues such as raising of limit of income tax exemption for disabled persons, no duties and taxes on aids and appliances meant for disabled persons, incentives to private sector to promote employment, facilities for mentally challenged persons, barrier free environment etc.

The demands relating to legislative, financial and administrative aspects involving various Ministries/Departments of Government of India and the State Governments have been referred to them. Customs duties on aids and appliances have been reduced and income tax exemptions have been enhanced by the Finance Ministry this year.